As regards F-16 aircraft, the US has cleared the US manufacturers of F-16 and F-18 aircraft to respond to an Indian request for Proposal (RFP) for the Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft for the Indian Air Force when it is issued. The process is still at an early stage. The RFP has not yet been issued by the Ministry of Defence. Responses to the RFP will be assessed on the merits of each offer.

Defence acquisition from the US at present are still modest and confined to a few systems. The US has however signaled its readiness to liberalise the defence trade relationship subject to its legislative and security requirements. This relationship has still to be developed. As a source of the most advanced defence technologies, enhanced levels of high technology defence procurement from the US could contribute to our defence modernization and preparedness.

Basic principles of the framework agreement signed with the US Government

261. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the basic principles of the framework agreement which the Defence Minister has signed with U.S.A. Government;

(b) what will be the implication of this agreement on India's defence and foreign policies; and

(c) would this imply Indian Armed Forces participating in any military action initiation by U.S.A. against international terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) A document entitled 'New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship' was signed on June 28, 2005 during Raksha Mantri's official visit to the US from June 27-30, 2005. The 'Framework' updates the 'Agreed Minutes on Defence Relations Between India and the United States' signed in January 1995 and seeks to advance common security interests such as maintaining security and stability; defeating terrorism and violent religious extremism; preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related materials, data and technologies; and protecting the free flow of commerce. It includes provisions for cooperation to enhance the capabilities of the US and Indian armed forces to deal with terrorism, disasters and the spread of

WMD; expand the defence trade, production and technology relationship with the US; and promote regional and global peace and stability, jointly or with others, through expanded interaction with other nations, exchange of perspectives of international security issues, increased intelligence exchanges, capacity building of other countries for peace- keeping operations, and collaboration in multinational operations when it is the common interest.

(b) The Framework is expected to enlarge available sources and options for the acquisition of defence equipment, provide access to advanced US defence technologies, help strengthen and modernize the Indian Armed Forces, and increase our leverage and strategic maneuverability in international affairs.

(c) No such participation is contemplated or implied in this arrangement. Participation in any operations will be guided by the national interest and principles of our foreign and defence policies, including our independent stand on international issues.

New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship

262. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI YASHWANT SINHA:
SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether during his recent visit to the USA, India and the USA signed on June 28, 2005 and agreement called the "New Framework for the US India Defence Relationship";

(b) if so, what are the salient features of this agreement; and

(c) what are the benefits which are likely to accrue to India from this new agreement?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) A document entitled "New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship" was signed on June 28, 2005, during the Raksha Mantri's visit to the United States of America (USA).